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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

Securing Our Border with an Employment Verification System That Works
Cosponsor HR 5515 – the “New Employee Verification Act”

March 4, 2008

Dear Colleague,

Last week leaders from the human resources and employer communities joined me to introduce the “New Employee Verification Act” (H.R. 5515). This legislation achieves three important objectives; ensuring a legal workforce, safeguarding workers’ identity, and protecting Social Security. I write today urging your support of this historic legislation.

Effective worksite enforcement is essential to securing our borders. Reforming worksite enforcement will affect millions of workers and must be done right. While other worksite enforcement measures have been proposed, only the New Employment Verification Act:

- Replaces the I-9 process with an electronic verification system for new hires only;
- Builds on a process already used by 90 percent of employers;
- Ensures that law abiding citizens are not verified by a federal law enforcement agency;
- Safeguards a worker’s identity through the latest biometric technology;
- Protects the mission and resources of the Social Security Administration; and
- Is supported by the H.R. Initiative for a Legal Workforce, a coalition of human resource organizations and business groups representing thousands of small and large U.S. employers from a broad range of sectors.

A summary of the key provisions in the bill is attached. For more detailed information, please visit Ways and Means Republicans at: <http://republicans.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.

Should you have any questions or wish to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Kim Hildred, from the Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee by email or at 225-4021 or Kathleen Black from my personal office by email or at 225-4201.

I hope you will cosponsor this legislation, thereby providing our nation with an effective system for worksite enforcement.

Sincerely,

/s Sam Johnson
Ranking Member

“New Employee Verification Act” – HR 5515
Summary of Key Provisions

1. Ensures a legal work force

- Strengthens enforcement through enhanced employer penalties.
- Provides a superior, user-friendly employment verification system by replacing the current paper-based, error-prone, I-9 work status verification process with a paperless, reliable Electronic Employment Verification System (EEVS).
- Allows employers to transmit EEVS data through a process already mandated for employer use to track down dead beat dads, the State’s new hire reporting process.
- Requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department Homeland Security to certify the accuracy of the system in advance of full implementation, and annually thereafter. Also requires the Government Accountability Office to evaluate the accuracy, efficiency and impact of the EEVS.
- Provides for the verification of U.S. citizens only by the SSA, thereby avoiding a “big brother” law enforcement agency building new databases on law abiding citizens.

2. Safeguards workers’ identities

- Creates an alternate, voluntary Secure Electronic Employment Verification System (SEEVs) to verify employees’ identity and work eligibility and to “lock” that identity once verified.
- Establishes a network of private sector government-certified experts to authenticate new employees’ identities utilizing existing background check and document screening tools.
- Ensures each employee’s identity is safeguarded through the use of a biometric identifier (such as a thumbprint). The employee would then present their identifier to their employer to confirm their identity and work authorization.
- Curtails the creation of new government bureaucracies to administer the employment verification system and does not require any new national or state identification cards to facilitate the process, thus savings billions of dollars as well as preventing another opportunity for identity fraud.

3. Protects Social Security

- Prevents wages earned through future unauthorized work from being used to determine benefits.
- Protects the SSA’s primary mission and trust funds by authorizing employment verification only through advanced appropriated funds.